

Our Calling: Methodist Council Objectives

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Action Required	To Note
Resolution	7/1. The Council receives the report.

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	To present the Council with updates on work undertaken towards the priority areas identified by the Council in support of the objectives.
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Our Calling: Methodist Council Objectives

The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission

Over the last two years the Conference and the Council has worked on ensuring that the *Our Calling* statement above is kept before all its work as the main strategic driver for our decision making and resource allocation.

The statement was further worked into eight areas of work where the Council recognised there was a task of work to do for which it was responsible.

The Council received in October 2019 MC/19/64 which offered updates on some of the specific priorities that had been identified which related to the tasks. Work has continued on these priority areas and the following is offered as an update:

Worship – increase the awareness of God’s presence and celebrate God’s love

1. Proclaiming the Gospel through worship	
The Council’s task: to consider how best to enable every act of worship conducted in the name of the Methodist Church to give honour to God through excellence, creativity, prayerful contemplation and encompassing a variety of spiritualities.	
Therefore the Council will aim:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To support and enable local preachers and ministers to lead high quality, engaging, authentic, contextual worship around the Connexion. b) To ensure the support and training is offered to resource local arrangements appropriately. 	
With the following as immediate priorities:	Update
To continue to refine the Worship: Leading and Preaching course – including addressing issues around online mode of delivery and appropriateness for Worship Leaders.	Processes updated so diaconal candidates have to do the certificated standard of Worship: Leading & Preaching. The assessment process is being redrafting to make things simpler.
To reflect on the nature and frequency of accreditation of those in authorised ministries and modelling ongoing feedback and review of those leading worship.	Peer review has been introduced into the review of Local Preachers.
To determine what support and ongoing training may be needed for the large number of supernumeraries leading worship.	There are new pages on the website for supernumeraries and circuits where they reside. The review, feedback and ongoing training on worship needs to be built into the Ministries team worship plan for all ministers.
To have agreed a mandatory Continuing Development package for Local Preachers.	Work continues on the suite of materials for Continuing Local Preacher Development.
To support development in ministerial training pilots.	Work continues on the Circuit Based Learning Programme Pilot.

2. The ministry of the whole people of God in the life of the world

The Council's task: to have a clear articulation of the Church's engagement with God's mission and therefore to ensure there are ministers, local preachers and lay leaders of the required gifts and qualities for that mission and that they are effectively deployed. Enabling all people to discern and utilise their gifts in responding to *Our Calling*.

Therefore the Council will aim:

- a) To have embedded an ethos of whole life, life long and life changing discipleship across the Connexion where a mutual respect of the vocations of lay and ordained flourish.
- b) To achieve an increase in vocations to ordained ministry, compared to 2016 through the opening up of exploration and training opportunities.
- c) To have in place processes to identify and train ministers who are missional, adaptable and collaborative, and able to lead the Church in the 2020s, 2030s and beyond.
- d) To have built on initial developments to offer a broad support package for lay workers and ensure they are deployed effectively in Circuits as well as nurture people into lay ministry roles,
- e) To implement a more effective and strategic Connexional approach for the deployment of ordained ministers including the creating and ending of appointments.
- f) To have inculcated a commitment to accountable discipleship for all Methodist people as a Methodist Way of Life.
- g) To ensure young people are part of strategies to participate in the development of vocations for the age we live in.

With the following as immediate priorities:	Update
To implement a strategy for an increased response to vocational discernment, including the diversity of those engaging in our processes.	Conversation continues with the Fellowship and Belonging Together groups. The Ministries Team is revising its processes to ensure that diversity is at the heart of what we do and offer. An Exploration Day for 18-30s in the autumn attracted 20 young people.
To grow the number of opportunities for vocational exploration.	Rise & Shine event to evolve into Young People's Vocational Exploration event. 18-30s candidate exploration event going ahead with good numbers signed up. Development of prospectus with details of all vocational opportunities for young adults. Research into the reasons that some members have not candidated has been completed and is being made widely available.
To re-invigorate the understanding of the possibilities of offering for presbyteral ministry in a local appointment	The Changing Patterns of Ministry working group continues to meet.
To complete a review of the selection of ministers, and to establish a working group to look at non-stipendiary ministry that need not be itinerant but is nevertheless connexional.	The Ministries Committee and Candidates' Selection Committee have on their agenda reviewing the candidating process in the light of the work of the Changing Patterns of Ministry working group.
To undertake work on the principles of how appointments are agreed and funded and to implement robust systems to scrutinise and approve appointment profiles.	There are more robust processes for scrutinised profiles in order to identify critical appointments. Initial Stationing and ministers of other conferences and churches processes have been improved this year.

To develop methods of identification and selection relating to the superintendents of the future.	The Evangelism & Growth (E&G) team are piloting some work around Transformational Leadership. Ministries are working with E&G in order to develop Leadership training.
To establish the mandatory training of superintendents to ensure they are equipped for leadership at circuit level.	The Ministries team is costing the possibility of making the Superintendents Conference available to all Superintendents on an annual basis.
To continue to resource the accountable supervision of those in ministry appropriately.	Development continues to enable ministers in the Connexional Team, Authorised Ministers and lay people in pastoral ministry roles to be supervised. We continue to develop our understanding of Supervision of Probation.
To continue to resource a high quality, locally-based, authorised lay led ministry.	This is part of the work of the Changing Patterns of Ministry Group.
To address the need to be able to identify diverse future senior leaders (for the Church's future) and then journey with them to enable them to flourish.	This is part of the work of the Changing Patterns of Ministry Group.
To engage with the Faith and Order Committee's work with the Church of England relating to interchangeability and the place of the diaconate.	Following decisions made by the Council in October 2019 the Secretary of the Faith and Order Committee and the Connexional Ecumenical Officer have been working with representatives of the Church of England to identify appropriate ways in which to continue to develop the Covenant relationship.

Learning and Caring – help people to grow and learn as Christians, through mutual support and care

3. Resources for the Church: the use of God's gifts	
The Council's task: to use the resources of the Church to support Districts, Circuits and churches to be most effective in their mission, by provide cost-effective Connexional specialist services and relevant local based resources	
Therefore the Council will aim:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To support the embedding of <i>Our Calling</i> in every aspect of the life of the Church enabling us all to make focused decisions. b) To have an effective suite of shared services for Districts, building on established services and having introduced new ones in response to demand (to include Property, Finance and other areas). c) To have in place a financial strategy which <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Is working towards a significant reduction in the assessment for local churches as income is drawn from other sources (ii) Enables a greater sharing of resources d) To consider how Districts can more effectively be resourced and the connexional principle of support articulated, and where managing trusteeship of Local Churches and Circuits should most effectively reside. 	
With the following as immediate priorities:	Update:
To decide how to make finance available in Districts for the support of Mission and <i>Our Calling</i> .	Following direction from the SRC and under the oversight of the Chair of the CGC, conversations are underway between the Grants and Evangelism & Growth teams to design a

	proportionate, but robust, distribution processes for the Mission in Britain Fund from 2020/2021.
To implement the property strategy and the finance strategy approved by the Council.	Fund purposes have been clarified and will be built into the budgeting process. Revised approach to fund management agreed by the SRC along with revised resource allocation proposal.
To have agreed the terms of reference for a review of the CPF levy that will explore the possibilities of granting an exemption in order to support missional work where there is no requirement/need for a new building.	An update was sent to the Council in October. Reactions to having a levy on leases have been negative so this idea will not be pursued further. Consideration of the impact of the Property Strategy on the sale of properties to be undertaken. The Connexional Secretary and Director of Finance & Resources will provide a further update in due course.
To ensure delivery from the reshaped Connexional Team for the best support for <i>Our Calling</i> .	A new publishing strategy has been agreed, focusing entirely on creating publications that resource the reaffirmation of <i>Our Calling</i> . Two new team roles are being created (from within existing headcount) to support its delivery; specifically a 'commissioning' role in editorial, to support new product development, and the role of 'production controller', to support more efficient and cost effective delivery of publications.
To oversee the Methodist Church House re-development project ensuring the process is shaped for the new building to be utilised to support the aims of the Methodist Church.	The Sub-Committee for the project continue to oversee work and an update with input from professionals will go to the SRC in February
4. Oversight and Leadership	
The Council's task: to operate the oversight/leadership functions of the Methodist Church as effectively as possible in pursuit of the Church's mission ensuring the most appropriate use of resources.	
Therefore the Council will aim:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To have refined patterns of oversight/leadership and governance so as to provide high-quality, priority-driven policy-making to deliver <i>Our Calling</i> as the discerned manifestation of the Church's mission. b) To ensure that MDR and supervision processes are embedded in the life of the Church for all in the active ministry. 	
With the following as immediate priorities:	Update
To ensure the ways of working of the Council, the Strategy and Resources Committee (SRC), the Chairs' Meeting and the Connexional Leaders' Forum (CLF) are fit to deliver the aim of 'having refined patterns of oversight/leadership and governance so as to provide high-quality, priority-driven policy-making to deliver <i>Our Calling</i> as the discerned manifestation of the Church's mission.'	The Council will explore further thinking on the nature of Trusteeship which could impact the role of the SRC, Council as well as the CLF in the long run. A further report will be taken to the Conference following the Council's discussions.

Service – be a good neighbour to people in need and to challenge injustice

5. A Church for all people	
<p>The Council's task: to be an inclusive and diverse Church by extending our reach and engagement with those who feel marginalized, ensuring that all feel protected to be able to participate.</p>	
<p>Therefore the Council will aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) For every District/Circuit to have a contextual strategy (which is both intentional and inclusive) for engagement which enables it to experience God's grace and people share experiences with the whole Connexion. b) To be a Church which is present lovingly serving the areas in most need. c) To ensure all people are safe in the Church and communities we seek to serve. 	
With the following as immediate priorities:	Update
<p>To develop a strategy for evangelism and discipleship for those less well served by reason of race or class – including taking forward the work of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee in relation to 'The Unfinished Agenda'.</p>	<p>The draft connexional Evangelism and Growth Strategy includes a deep and expansive focus on <i>Church at the Margins</i> with three primary goals: (1) to start a movement of new Christian communities led by those at the margins; (2) to work along people experiencing poverty to deepen community engagement; and (3) to build on the biblical connection between evangelism and social justice. A new Church at the Margins Officer will be appointed to oversee this work starting in connexional year 2020/21, incorporating key elements of the work of the current Fresh Expressions Missioner, who will sit down at the end of 2019/20.</p>
<p>To continue to support the growth of the language, cultural and national Fellowship Groups.</p>	<p>The Assistant Ecumenical Officer is now working with the Fellowship Groups Sub-committee. A programme of work is being developed.</p>
<p>To continue with the growth of 3Generate as a significant engagement in the discipleship journey of children and young people, paying particular attention to those places where young people are most excluded. This will include encouragement of the Year of Testimony initiative.</p>	<p>The development of 3Generate as part of a wider strategy of participation of children and young people in the church is continuing following a successful 3Generate 2019. The NEC is now booked for the next 3 years and dates set. Young people will play an ever increasing part in the development and leadership of the event and the strategies that drive it. A pilot will be undertaken in 2020 to allow for children from 4-7 to visit for the day with parents/carers with a view to lowering the younger age in 2021. A fulltime event/logistics manager post will be recruited in January. Work is underway developing new ways to engage and hear the voice of children and young people paying particular attention to those places where young people are most excluded.</p> <p><i>The Story Project</i> launched in autumn 2019 to assist with the development of local church cultures of lay testimony and to gather diverse Methodist testimonies from across the Connexion: https://thestoryproject.org.uk</p>
<p>To encourage churches, Circuits and Districts to engage with the Marriage and Relationships consultation process</p>	<p>As at 1 December 2019, we had distributed 25k printed copies of the <i>God in Love Unites Us</i> Report, more than 22k copies of the Study Guide and 2,750 copies of the supporting film on a USB stick. We are liaising with</p>

	Methodist Schools to mail copies of the printed materials and the film to all their head teachers. The materials are being translated into Spanish, French and Portuguese to support our partnership and dialogue with overseas partner churches.
6. Social Holiness	
The Council's task: to resource work and programmes which then transform our society and communities to embody the Kingdom of God through living out our social holiness; offering loving acts of justice and service to all and challenging injustice wherever we see it.	
Therefore the Council will aim:	
a) To have resourced ways for Circuits and Districts to be a significant voice and proactive participant in communities throughout the Connexion; working with others to bring transformation for the sake of the Gospel. This includes our ongoing work to challenge injustice by engaging on public issues for the sake of the whole community.	
With the following as immediate priorities:	Update
To continue to develop partnerships which look to a wide range of individuals and groups (including ecumenical partners) whom we can be in mission with together (including Mission and Ministry in Covenant).	The Ecumenical Officer and the Secretary of the Faith and Order Committee have been working with colleagues in the Church of England following decisions made by the Council in October. A response from the Methodist Church was made following the decision of Churches Together in England relating to the fourth presidency. The Assistant Secretary of the Conference participated in a consultation about the future direction of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. The President and Vice-President met with the Moderator of the Church of Scotland in November.
To commit to a key number of issues where we want to act as a prophetic voice.	The Churches which are members of JPIT agreed the following priority areas for work in 2019/20: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A just economy that enables the flourishing of all life • A planet where the environment is renewed • A society where the poorest and most marginalised are at the centre • A society that welcomes the stranger • A world which actively works for peace • A politics characterised by listening, kindness and truthfulness • Ecumenical resources were produced for the general election on key issues, hustings, and prayer under the #LovePrayVote campaign • Issues of justice and “unlikely messengers” in society were highlighted to 6,000+ people through the interactive social media retelling of the “Natwivity” • The JPIT monthly Faith in Politics podcast focused on issues of refugees and sanctuary including an interview with Inderjit Bhogal • Media work around the Channel 4 “Growing Up Poor” documentary

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hundreds of people wrote to their MPs about the lack of a reply to the Church Leaders' letter to the Prime Minister expressing concerns about the effect of a no-deal Brexit on those locked in poverty. A reply was received from the Prime Minister.
For the Committees of the Council and the Connexional Team to strengthen their engagement with MHA, Action for Children and All We Can; remembering their heritage but also our shared hope in a brave new world.	The back page of <i>the connexion</i> magazine is being offered for free to each Methodist organisation in turn to advertise their key campaigns and help to maintain their profile with the Methodist people, starting with AWC in October and MHA in January.
To ensure our Grants processes (particularly Mission in Britain Grants and Methodist Action on Poverty and Justice Grants) enable work in the hardest to reach places.	In autumn 2019, the CGC awarded £730,000 to British mission projects, out of a budget of £2.39m. New work that was funded included new missional communities and embedded outreach workers, table-top gaming evangelism, and support for deprived communities. The remainder of the MiB budget will be available for the March grants round, when they will be considering property grant applications too. With only £750,000 available for property grant making, the CGC may have to make some very hard decisions next June.

Evangelism - Making more followers of Jesus Christ

7. Evangelism	
The Council's task: to equip and give confidence to the Methodist people to share the Gospel of Christ with those in our local communities so as to lead people to making a personal commitment to Christ.	
Therefore the Council will aim:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To have made decisions which have contributed towards the priority of having halted the fall in numbers of Methodist worshippers in our Districts (reducing the rate of decline in membership). b) To have developed the mechanisms to further embed 'Fresh Expressions' as important components in contextual missional engagement. c) To have concentrated resources where we are, or can be strong, accepting this means we will not be present in all places. 	
With the following as Immediate Priorities:	Update
To have provided the resources and momentum for Districts to establish credible strategies for growth and increased evangelism	<p>After 100 on-site consultations and thousands of conversations across the Connexion, <i>God for All</i>, the draft Connexional Evangelism and Growth strategy has been written and deeply engaged at an October 2019 Consultation attended from 250+ diverse Methodists representing every District.</p> <p>The evangelism pages of the Methodist Church website have been updated to include a tool-kit of key information, starting guidance, and ideas for next steps in the areas of mission planning, church starts, church growth and change, evangelism, and discipleship.</p>

<p>Each church, Circuit and District to have in place a 'Mission Plan' to underpin the future direction of work, including deployment of personnel and use of reserves.</p>	<p><i>Our Church's Future Story</i> has been published and is available for free. This set of resources takes churches, circuits or districts through the process of considering and planning for the next chapter in their story. 26 of the 30 Districts have submitted Mission Plans.</p>
<p>To evaluate gaps in our apologetic resources to ensure the Church has access to the best resources possible.</p>	<p>Over the past year, a suite of apologetics resources (<i>Talking of God Together, Talking Jesus, Talking of God With Others</i>) has been developed, sourced, promoted, with complimentary copies sent to every circuit in the Connexion. A diverse design team is working in concert with Districts, the Learning Network, and Faith and Order Committee to map clear, flexible discipleship pathways and resources for a <i>Methodist Way of Life</i>.</p>
<p>8. One Mission</p>	
<p>The Council's task: to be celebrating and playing a full part in the global community of Methodists (e.g. the World Methodist Council and European Methodist Council) for the sake of transformation of the world through the sharing of the gospel, and being a confident Church acting prophetically in our own Connexion with ecumenical and other partners.</p> <p>A world transformed by God's love; A confident Church motivated to share God's love; A people celebrating being part of a worldwide family. [Vision Statement for Mission, adopted by the 2012 Conference DR 3/16]</p>	
<p>Therefore the Council will aim:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) To ensure that the Mission in Britain Fund and the World Mission Fund are both serving the needs of local communities and global partners. b) To be more aware in all the work of the Council of the variety of languages and cultures that make up our own Church. c) To have worked with partners such as All We Can to build capacity in partner churches around the world. 	
<p>With the following as immediate priorities:</p>	<p>Update</p>
<p>To ensure the One Mission Forum as a place of sharing and encouragement for all the Districts.</p>	<p>A final gathering in October brought together former One Mission Forum district reps to consult on alternative ways to achieve the learning from local and global mission originally envisaged from the Forum. In November, Cornwall became the pilot district for a 'mission roadshow' comprising of c40 exhibitors and a programme of speakers showcasing mission projects. A review of this event has been undertaken and the viability of rolling out a limited annual programme of events staged on a similar model is to be explored with the District Chairs in January; the success of this model is very dependent on a high level of local ownership; for promotion and as contributors.</p>
<p>To continue to realise and grow the Strategy for Global Relationships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building through Church Can is developing well, with new partners engaging in this process. • A legal agreement with the Methodist Church in Portugal has been drawn up under which the grant for their income-generating investment project can be released.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first tranche of grants have been released to The Queen’s Foundation, Cliff College and Wesley House to facilitate capacity building programmes with global partners in education. • An evangelist through CIEMAL has now been identified for appointment in the Newcastle District from September 1st 2020. • A successful Encounter Together (ET) Visit has been held in India. • Plans are advanced for a One Programme: Teams Encounter Together visit to Hungary in 2020 and also financial support under the ET programme for visits to Mexico and Israel/Palestine. • The Encounter Worldwide programme has facilitated a short-term skills-based service placement in the Sia’toutai Theological College, Tonga. • A ministerial sabbatical placement was made to a school in Chile. • The implementation of the Mission Partner Review has created a more robust system of pastoral care and debriefing for Mission Partners, plus the implementation of new stipends and benefits. • We are reintroducing the pre-Conference consultation with representatives from Partner Churches.
<p>Continued work to ensure the ‘Fellowship Groups’ are understood as a modern day expressions of societies of the Methodist Church and support them accordingly.</p>	<p>A residential meeting will take place in January which includes work on the Methodist Way of Life and our understanding of connexionalism.</p>
<p>To identify the links which will be nurtured and led by each District around the world with particular focus on Europe.</p>	<p>Monies and advice will be available for each District to facilitate a visit from a partner church that will help progress a strategic mission goal of the District and encourage twinning. A policy for sending Representatives of MCB to partner churches has been drawn up and the nurturing of District links is now to be a key element in deciding representation. The Director of Global Relationships is to meet the Chairs of District to discuss and encourage twinning as part of their mission planning process.</p>